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ABSTRACT

A midwestern university is testing a program that uses the Apple II computer to help students in an advertising research course develop their skills in preparing and presenting research reports using computer generated graphics for both oral and written presentations. One of the course requirements is the preparation of a final project, including a research report based on data that have been provided in the form of computer printouts. Use of the Apple computers allow the students to improve the quality of their presentations. Two software programs are needed for the Apple II to develop charts and graphs that can be used in both oral and written presentations: Apple Business Graphics, designed to enable the user to create charts and graphs based on research data; and Screen Director program, designed to enable the user to create a computer generated "slide show" using the charts and graphs created by the business graphics program. Several benefits have been derived from the experiments using this system. First, students discover new ways in which the computer can be used to help in solving advertising related problems. Second, students are given the opportunity to make formal presentations, thus helping them both overcome some of their fear of speaking before groups, and develop a presentation that covers the important points quickly and clearly. Finally, students learn the importance of a well-planned and well-designed research report. (HTH)

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USING THE MICROCOMPUTER FOR ADVERTISING RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

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CS 207 657

USING THE MICROCOMPUTER FOR ADVERTISING RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

Micro computers are fast becoming one of the most versatile tools for enhancing the teaching of advertising and for preparing advertising students for careers which will require an understanding of computer applications in making advertising-related decisions. Many schools and departments are now using these small 'home' computers to help teach ad students the basics of media analysis, budgeting, copytesting and a host of other similar concepts and techniques.

At a recent meeting of the American Academy of Advertising, a session was devoted to the discussion of ways in which computers are now being used to enhance the teaching of advertising. Educators from several universities discussed and demonstrated progams which they have developed as teaching aids. These included media simulation programs; ad budgeting models; copytesting models and media analysis models which are used in teaching students the basis for media analysis and media buying.

While most of the work to date has been in relation to the advertising media class, it hasn't been limited to that course. At present, for example, at the University of Oklahoma, a program is being tested using the Apple II computer in a program designed to help students in the Advertising Research course develop their skills in preparing and presenting research reports using computer generated graphics for both the oral and written presentations.

THE PROBLEM

One of the requirements for students taking the Advertising Research course is the preparation of a final project including a research report based on data which has been provided to them in the form of computer printouts. Their instructions are to use the data in the printouts to prepare a report for their client which will answer a list of specific research questions which he has raised. As part of their report they must not only provide a written report of their findings, but must also be prepared to make a 15-minute oral presentation to the client explaining their findings.

As part of this final written and oral report, they must include not only a verbal explanation of the data, but also develop a set of charts and graphs which show graphically the important relationships which are to be found in the raw data. This means that they must not only know their data thoroughly, but be able to translate it into the type of chart or graph which will provide a clear and concise overview of the information.

They must be able to use the charts and graphs they develop in both their oral and in the written reports. This means that they must find a way to make the charts adaptable to each format which the oral

presentation will be made to the entire class and they all must be able to see clear the information on the chart.

In the past students have had to resort to making two sets of charts--one for the oral presentation, and the other for the written presentaion. Those for the oral presentation were usually either on large sheets of illustration board or in some cases on transparencies which required the use of an overhead projector. In most cases the charts and graphs were hand drawn by the student (and looked like it) and didn't really appear very professional.

THE SOLUTION

With the acquistion of the School's Apple computers (we now have two) the opportunity to develop a means by which students could use this equipment to improve the quality of their presentations became a reality.

In order to use the Apple II computer to develop charts and graphs which could be used in both their oral and written presentations it was first necessary to purchase two software programs--one to create the graphs and charts, and the other to provide a means by which these graphics could be presented.

The first program, called Apple Business Graphics, is designed to enable the user to create charts and graphs based on research data. While it is capable of working from either raw data or data which has already been analyzed and reduced to a more manageable level, we have found it easier to start students off using the later format. To use the program all the student has to do is determine which data is to be used in the chart and then enter that data into the computer from the keyboard. Once the data has been entered, then the student can select the type of chart or graph which they feel is most appropriate for presenting the information. The selection includes (1)pie charts, (2)bar charts and (3) line charts--the latter two can include up to for separate sets of data on the same set of axes.

The second program is the Screen Director program which is designed to enable the user to create a computer generated 'slide show' using the charts and graphs created with the Apple Business Graphics program. It also provides for the creation of 'title slides' which can be included in the presentation to explain in more detail the information which will follow.

HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS

In order for a student to develop a 'slide show' they must start by using the Apple Business Graphics program to create a series of charts and graphs. Once created, each chart is saved on a diskette for future use. The user simply selects the information to be included on the chart, types it in and then selects the format for the chart.

Once the user has completed the set of charts to be used in the presentation and has saved them on a diskette, the next step is to create the 'slide tray' using the Screen Director program. To start

creating a 'tray' you simply list the charts which you have stored on the diskette, and then decide the order in which you wish them to appear in your presentation.

The next step is to decide the 'title slides' you will need to complete the presentation and create them using the Screen Director editor. Once the student has created and saved the title slides they are then ready to put all of these 'slides' into a 'tray' for their presentation. All this requires is for the student to type in the names of each of the charts and title slides in the order of appearance. The Screen Director is a menu-driven program which clearly prompts the user for the necessary information and even provides a 'help' function which can be called up if the user does not understand what to do next.

Once the students have created their entire presentation they are then ready to save the entire tray to the diskette for future presentations. The student has three options as to ways in which to make their presentation when the time comes. (1)They can let the computer show the slides automatically; (2)they can show the slides manually by typing in the name of each slide in the order of presentation, or (3) they can show them manually by using the remote control--exactly like the one on a regular slide projector.

To make an automatic presentation the student simply indicates as part of the information used in creating a 'tray' the length of time they want each slide to appear on the screen. Once they start the show all they have to do is describe the information on the screen--it will change automatically at the proper time.

Using the keyboard offers the advantage of not only controlling the timing of each slide, but also enables the user to select slides in any order they desire--and even to recall previous slides for reshowing when needed.

Using the remote control also allows the user to control the timing of the presentation but the order of appearance is fixed based on the way the tray was originally created--all they can do is go forward or backward from slide to slide, one at a time.

However, it is possible to use all three of the methods of presentation simply by switching from one to the other during the course of the show. The important point is that it gives the student the ability to make any last minute adjustments in the presentation which will help the client clearly understand the data being discussed.

Using the preceding procedures a student can create a fully-supported oral presentation which can be shown to the client using the videomonitor and the computer. Each slide appears on the monitor screen when requested. The computer can be hooked up to a special high resolution monitor or to a regular television set--even a large-screen tv set if the audience is too large for the regular set. There is only one disadvantage to this latter process--the resolution of the regular tv set is not good enough to make some of the small type on the screen readable, and in most cases the monitors are too

small to be seen by large groups.

The solution to this problems is to simply print out the charts and graphs and make overhead transparencies from them. This enables the student to use the same graphs as they will include in their final written report as the basis for their oral presentation. Since the Apple II computer can be used in conjunction with several different printers which are capable of printing graphics, it is no problem to create the cart and then produce a 'hardcopy' of it on the printer. The Apple Business Graphics program has a subroutine which enable you to print out the charts you create on the screen. (Examples of charts printed on a dot-matrix printer are included in the Appendix of this paper).

HOW THE PROGRAM IS USED

Using the program outlined above, students are provided with research data in the form of computer printouts of data from actual research projects conducted by the Journalism Research Center. They are instructed on the procedures for reading and making sense of frequency and crosstab data during class, and are given in-class problems designed to help them make use of this data in developing their final presentation.

Once the students are able to wade through the data they have been given, they are then instructed to develop a presentation designed to tell their client what all of those numbers mean. It is then their job to decide (1)which numbers to use in their presentation in order to answer the questions raised by the client and (2) to create graphs and charts which will illustrate the answers which this data provides.

The first step in the process is to extract from the printouts (which deliberately include a lot of 'extraneous' information) the data which will do the best job of showing the client the important relationships expressed by the data. The next step is to determine the most appropriate way in which to illustrate this information--which type of graph will be the best to use. The final step is to actually create the graphs which will be used in the final presentation to their client and to develop the written presentation which will accompany this report.

When the student has completed the oral and written presentations some are asked to make formal presentations to the class so that others can see what they have done and can critique their selection of data and their use of the various graphics to support their presentation.

ADVANTAGES OF THE SYSTEM

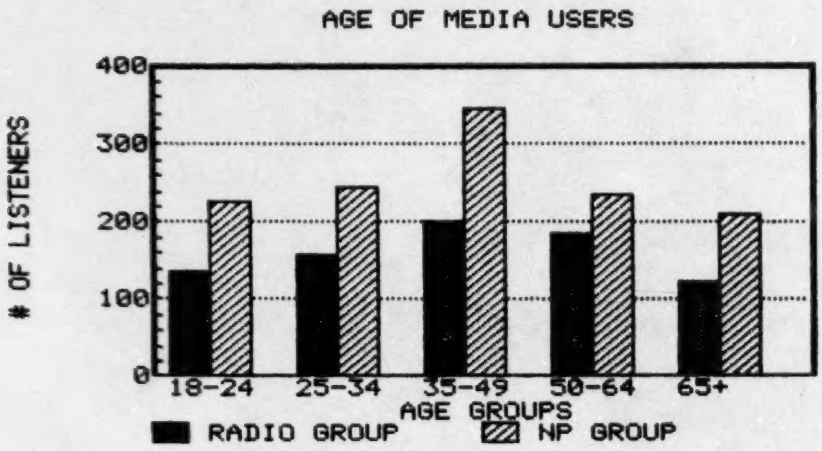
Several benefits have been derived from the experiments using this system. First, students discover new ways in which the computer can be used to help in solving advertising-related problems. Not only can it help analyze the data from a research study, but now it can also be used to help create attractive graphics which can be used to clearly explain what the data is trying to tell the client.

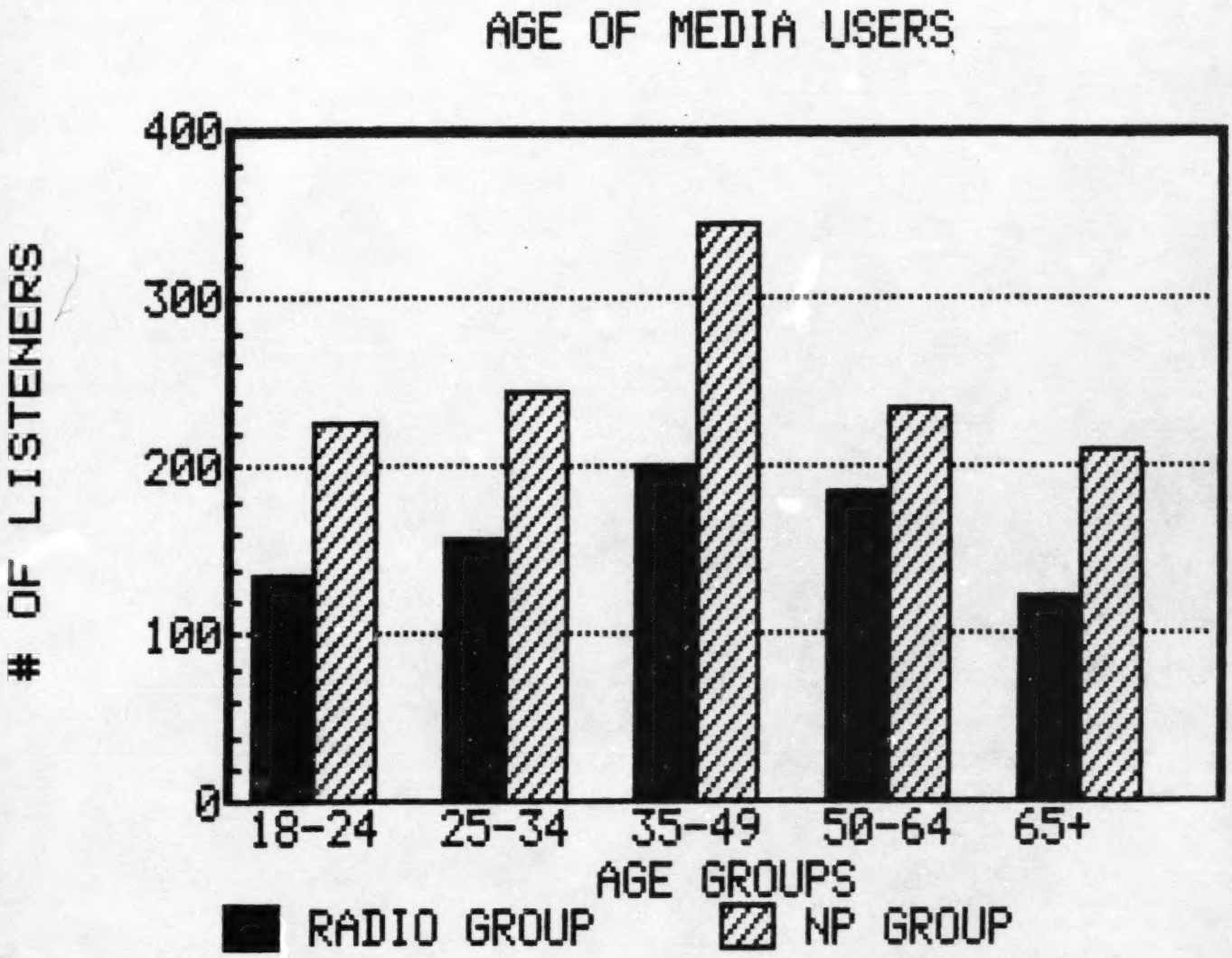
Second, students are given the opportuity to make formal presentations which help them overcome some of the natural fear of speaking before groups and also helps them learn how to develop such presentations so that they can cover the important points quickly and clearly in the time provided. They can also compare their presentations with those made by others in the class and thus see what works and what doesn't.

Finally, these students learn the importance of a well planned and well designed research report. They discover that it is not only essential to conduct accurate and reliable research projects, but to be able to explain their findings to others in a manner which is both clear, concise and accurate as well.

APPENDIX A

EXAMPLES OF CHARTS CREATED USING THE APPLE COMPUTER


AGE OF MEDIA USERS
400
300
200
100
0
OF LISTENERS
18-24
25-34
35-49
50-64
65+
AGE GROUPS
RADIO GROUP
NP GROUP


AGE OF MEDIA USERS
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18-24
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35-49
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65+
AGE GROUPS
RADIO GROUP
NP GROUP